

Informer or Plant?

Berrigan Witness Under Fire

By Betty Medsger
Washington Post Staff Writer

LEWISBURG, Pa.—At night 32-year-old Boyd Douglas was a prisoner inside the 30-foot high walls of Lewisburg Federal Penitentiary.

Former associates say his hatred of imprisonment changed somewhat after the Rev. Philip Berrigan arrived at the prison in May.

Douglas told friends about long evening conversations inside the prison with the activist priest who was serving time for destroying draft records at Catonsville, Md. That was Douglas' night life.

But on mornings, beginning a year ago, Douglas was released six days a week to become a student on the campus of Bucknell University. Sometimes he got to the university, about two miles from the prison, by hitching a ride on the mail truck.

Somewhere along the line, Douglas' night and day life



BOYD DOUGLAS

... vanishes from campus

seem to have been united in one purpose: to serve as an informer for the government.

Released from prison in December, Douglas is believed to be the chief source of government evidence in the alleged kidnap-bomb plot that FBI Di-

rector J. Edgar Hoover says Philip Berrigan hatched while at the Lewisburg Penitentiary.

Douglas was to have been a fulltime student at Bucknell this semester. But he has disappeared, believed to be held by the government in protective custody. Since he left the campus in December, six persons have been indicted and arraigned in the case and seven others have been named, but not charged, as co-conspirators.

One consequence of the bizarre case is apprehension on the campus of Bucknell University about the possible use of university-prison study programs as a vehicle for FBI or other law enforcement surveillance.

"If I knew about such a person being on the campus," said university provost Dr. Wendell Smith this week, "I'd expose him immediately."

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"It is in the nature of a college community," said Dr. Smith, "that if we're not open, we defeat the purpose for which we exist. We can't be cooperating with plants and FBI agents."

There are many theories here as to who and what Douglas was, but the one most widespread among those who knew him on the campus peace movement was that the prisoner originally had a sincere interest in anti-war activities but was not deeply committed emotionally or intellectually.

Tom Love is a 23-year-old draft-card burner who believes strongly in civil disobedience. Douglas, during his releases from prison, shared Love's apartment and discussed such ideas.

"I had no feeling that he was an informer or was using me," Love says. "He seemed to express himself in the common cliches of the time and

did not have depth beyond that ... I tried to talk to Boyd about political theory— anarchism, socialism, communism and other movements—but Boyd wasn't interested."

Love recalled that Douglas repeated words and phrases of the Rev. Phillip Berrigan.

"There was a contradiction in Phil's nonviolence and Boyd's past violence," said Love. In 1967 Douglas was sentenced by a federal judge in Wisconsin to five years' imprisonment for assault on an FBI agent and interstate transportation of forged securities.

"He never seemed to deal with that contradiction," said Love.

During the fall, he said, "there was a time when Boyd displayed a great deal of anxiety. He would not talk, was very unsociable, very unfriendly." About the same time, professors report, Douglas started skipping classes.

Douglas' history professor recalls asking Douglas very early in his college days perhaps last Feb., whether he was an informer.

As Richard Drinnon, chairman of the history department, describes it, Douglas was upset. He lowered his trousers and showed the professor some of the scars he had received when he participated in 1964 a medical experiment that resulted in deep scars on his legs and arms.

Displaying the scars, he seemed embittered. He went on to describe attacking the FBI agent. And then he said that any convict who had had those experiences would hardly be a stool pigeon.

Professors who were closely associated with Douglas while he was a student, are resentful because they believe the government has no basis for its charges and is now seeking evidence to justify indictments based on Douglas' reports.

Said Gene Chenoweth, chairman of the political science department and an advisor to Douglas while he was on campus: "Things are not over. Any of us might be subpoenaed. I don't think the government has a case. They don't have a case and that makes them more vicious."

Some of the theories of the professors have been echoed by some persons who have testified before the grand jury in Harrisburg.

Francis X. Gallagher, attorney for the Rev. J. William Michelman, Baltimore Jesuit priest, who appeared before the grand jury this week, said one of the reasons the priest refused to testify was that questions put to him were about persons already indicted and the acts for which they've been indicted.

Speculating that the government is having a difficult time corroborating its original evidence, Gallagher charged that the government was using the grand jury as a "fishing expedition."

Father Michelman, who was a character witness earlier at a bail hearing for the three Baltimore men indicted in the plot, now risks being cited for contempt because he refused to testify after being granted immunity.

Questions being asked of grand jury witnesses also have given rise to speculation that the government is more interested in having the grand jury pursue information about raids on Selective Service offices than it is in pursuing the specific charges listed in the indictment.

Most of the conspirators and co-conspirators in the case have publicly taken responsibility for destruction of Selective Service property. But in many of the raids in which they were involved, no arrests were made at the times of the incidents.

Bucknell persons who got to know and like Douglas think he may have become an informer only after being caught by prison officials with a letter he was taking in or out of the prison for the peace movement. Uncensored messages to and from prisoners is forbidden.

The theory that Douglas became an informer at a later date rather than at the outset of his college days is strengthened by the fact that he first inquired about coming to the



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The Reverends Daniel (left) and Philip Berrigan

university Sept. 5, 1969, seven months before Philip Berrigan was due to have arrived at the prison. Berrigan, in fact, failed to report and was not arrested until May, 1970.

Chenoweth contends that Douglas came on "good faith, both on his part and our part."

"I think he was manipulated first by the peace movement and then by the FBI and the prison," said Chenoweth, emphasizing that if peace movement persons asked him to carry letters in and out of the prison they were asking "a lot" of a man who had spent much of the last decade in prison and was anxious to get out.

"Even though I resent that what he has said implicates friends of mine in a comic book plot," said Chenoweth, "I feel he was manipulated to such an extent, that he was in the position of having no choice."

So far, the grand jury has subpoenaed two Bucknell faculty members and two students, all of whom Douglas became acquainted with in his capacity as a student.

It was through meetings and parties arranged by Boyd that several faculty members met friends of Philip Berrigan when they came to visit the priest. Some of these friends have now been indicted.

Though none of the Bucknell persons who discussed their associations with Douglas called him a provocateur, they say he would "test" them

on their thinking about the movement and possible tactics.

Professor Drinnon was a skeptic all along, he says. "It would appear he did his damndest to set me up," said Drinnon this week as he recalled one of his last conversations with Douglas, who was in one of Drinnon's classes last semester.

"It was the day after Hoover's testimony," said Drinnon, referring to the FBI director's charges before a Senate appropriations committee that an East Coast Conspiracy to Save Lives planned to kidnap presidential adviser Henry Kissinger and blow up tunnels under federal buildings in Washington.

"He came in and wanted to know if I had heard what Hoover had said. I said yes. He said, 'It's not all that fantastic.' He then said he was pretty sure a grand jury would be investigating his (Douglas') activities."

"I didn't pursue it with him," said Drinnon. "I had pretty well made up my mind about him by then."